

# Shantideva's Bodhicaryâvatâra

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Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin

Session 52 - Saturday October 29, 2022

**Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)**

## REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

### Lama's Invocation of the Buddhas and assembly

### Short practice of Mental Quiescence – Further generation of Bodhicitta

Tashi Deleg!

Due to my personal health condition, this teaching has been interrupted. I wish to apologise for this. Let me reassure you that I have well recovered from lung micro-surgery. Apart from minor after-effects, my breathing capacity is well re-established. I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each who contributed a way or another to this recovery.

Before resuming our study of the Bodhicaryâvatâra, let us remind ourselves of the main points discussed so far in its sixth chapter, a detailed presentation of the cultivation of Patience.

By the end of the previous session, session 51, we completed our study of the following points:

1. The removal of anger (verses 1–10)
2. Identifying the object of patience (verse 11)
3. Cultivating Patience
  1. Cultivating patience regarding what we do not want
  2. Cultivating patience regarding what brings us suffering
- The patience of accepting suffering (verses 12–21)
- Patience that consists in certainty regarding the ultimate reality of things (verses 22–33)
- The patience of making light of what causes harm (verses 34–51)
  3. Cultivating patience towards those who treat us with contempt (verses 52–63)
  4. Cultivating patience towards those who ill-treat our loved ones (verses 64–75)
  5. Cultivating patience when people do good to our enemies (verses 76–86)
  6. Cultivating patience towards obstacles that prevent us from getting what we want
  7. Cultivating patience towards obstacles that prevent unpleasant things from happening to our enemies (verses 87–89)

The next and last topic on the practice of Patience on its advanced levels presented by Shantideva is:

**“Cultivating patience with those who obstruct what we and our friends desire”.**

This subject is treated throughout stanzas 90 to 111.

I call on your patience as I intend to catch up a little bit by studying today the first eleven of these stanzas.

### **Stanza 90:**

**Praise and fame, these shows of respect,  
Won't bring positive force, won't bring a long life,  
Won't bring bodily strength, nor freedom from sickness.  
They won't bring physical pleasure either.**

No matter how much we are longing for acquiring honours and recognition in a worldly sense, it is inappropriate to be annoyed with those who throw obstacles in our way of getting these.

If you think about it, isn't it true that all marks of reverence of praise and fame shown to us by others cannot increase the merit that will benefit us in our future lives?

Similarly, says Kunzang Palden, it will not increase our lifespan in this life. It will not bring us health, strength, or anything for the body: no food to calm our hunger, no drink to quench our thirst.

**Stanza 91:**

**If I were aware of what's in my self-interest,  
What in my self-interest would there be in them?  
If just mental happiness were what I wanted,  
I should devote myself to gambling and so on, and to alcohol too.**

If we are intelligent enough to know what benefits us and how to secure it, we will ask ourselves what good is there in such things as praise and renown. The answer is that there is none!

It could be argued that although they do not benefit the body, they are good for the mind in that they make us happy. That is why such things are pleasurable.

Yet, if it is only pleasure that we want, we might as well make ourselves beautiful and go in for gambling, drugs and sexual intercourse.

**Stanza 92:**

**For the sake of fame, people would give away wealth  
Or would get themselves killed.  
But what use is there with words of fame?  
Once they've died, to whom will they bring pleasure?**

The actions of ignorant people are completely senseless. In their attempts to secure a reputation for magnanimity and for gaining victory on every claim, they waste everything they have.

To gain fame for courage, they go to war and risk their lives.

But when one is dead, what use are such pleasant-sounding words as "He's won; he's a hero"? Who will there be to take advantage and pleasure in them? No one!

**Stanza 93:**

**At the collapse of his sandcastle,  
A child cries in despair.  
Similarly, at the loss of praise and fame,  
My mind shows the face of a child.**

For example, children fascinate themselves by building sandcastles. But later when it crumbles down, these silly, ignorant children burst into tears and cry heartbrokenly.

It is all but the same with us! When our fame and good reputation start to be offended and fail, we are unhappy and suffer. Our minds are as deluded that of these foolish children.

**Stanza 94:**

**Because an impromptu word is something lacking a mind,  
It's impossible that it has the intention to praise me.  
But, proclaiming, "The other one offering me praise is delighted with me,"  
If I consider that a cause also to be delighted.**

We might wonder whether the joy we have in being eulogised arises from the pleasure taken in the words of praise or does it come from the state of mind of the person who praises us?

Of course, the short-lived words spoken by another person, being devoid of intellect, cannot intend to praise us! It therefore does not make sense to be pleased by them.

Hence, we say that we are made happy by the joy experienced by others when they praise us. Isn't it indeed that which causes our happiness?

**Stanza 95:**

**Well, whether it's toward someone else or toward me,  
What use to me is another person's joy?  
That pleasure of joy is his alone.  
I won't get even a share of it.**

Anyway, the real question is to know that what we benefit from is the pleasure that some take in praising us or our loved ones.

It can't be of any use to us. Because their pleasure belongs to them and them alone. We cannot even experience a part of it.

**Stanza 96:**

**If I take pleasure in his pleasure (with me),  
I must do like that in all cases, in fact.  
How is it that I don't take pleasure  
When he has the pleasure of joy with another?**

It could be argued that when a mother is happy, her child is also happy. In the same way, when those who praise us are happy, we are happy too.

But for us who are practicing the way of the Bodhisattva, the happiness of any being must be a cause of great joy.

Why is it then that, when praise is directed toward those whom we dislike, providing them pleasure, our jealous minds are made miserable? There is something wrong here; the two attitudes are in contradiction.

**Stanza 97:**

**So joy is arising in me  
Simply due to, "Me, I'm being praised!"  
But there in fact, because thinking like that is just nonsense,  
It comes down to nothing but the behaviour of a child.**

When we investigate to see whether the satisfaction, we feel on realizing that we are being praised and that others are speaking well of us is caused by the actual words or by the state of mind of those who praise us, in both cases, our pleasure is shown to be completely pointless.

It is therefore devoid of common sense and is like the silly behaviour of children who are happy with their sandcastles; yet are attached to them.

**Stanza 98:**

**Being praised and such things, cause me distraction.  
They cause my disgust with samsara to disintegrate as well.  
I become jealous of those with good qualities,  
And that makes me demolish success.**

It is said too, that samadhi or concentration dwells in minds that are weary with samsara. But if our minds are not weary, then—no need to speak of concentration—we will not even accomplish the virtues

of body and speech. If we do possess a few qualities worthy of appreciation, our envy of those who are praised for their excellence increases and we are irritated and distressed by the worthiness of others. This is how the excellence of this, and future lives is utterly destroyed.

We too have this kind of defilement.

**Stanza 99:**

**Therefore, aren't those who are hovering close by  
For striking down praise and the like for me  
Actually, involved in protecting me from falling  
Into a worse rebirth state?**

Therefore, all those unpleasant people who stay close by to invalidate whatever praise is given to us -together with all veneration, good reputation, and prosperity-, are surely there to guard us from falling in the hells or the other realms of sorrow.

For praise is indeed something to which we get attached. Rather than being angry with such people, we should be grateful to them for their kindness and the good they do to us.

**Stanza 100:**

**For me, whose primary interest is in gaining freedom,  
Bondage to material gain and shows of respect are things I mustn't have.  
So how can I get enraged with those who are causing me  
To be freed from my having been bound?**

Shantideva remind us that we are striving to gain liberation from the prison of samsara where we are bound by afflictive emotion. We obviously do not need all the praise, gain, and reverential treatment that jail us more and more in that state of bondage, any more than a prisoner chained in prison has need of further handcuffs.

How can we be resentful of those who strive to release us from the ties of respect and wealth, the very bonds of samsara? It makes no sense at all!

**Stanza 101:**

**For me, who would enter a house of suffering,  
How can I get enraged with those who've come,  
As if from Buddha's inspiration,  
In the form of a door panel not letting me pass in.**

Opening the door to wealth and honours and clinging to them is an omen foretelling a descent into the lower realms. Given that we are determined to plunge headlong into the sorrow of the states of loss, Shantideva reminds us that those who hinder us from acquiring fame and fortune block the way to such a destiny.

They are like the Buddha's very blessing. How can we possibly be angry with them, seeing the benefit that they bring to us? We ought to be grateful instead.

We will stop here for today. Let us practice mental quiescence for a short while, before dedicating the merit of this session for the benefit of all.

